

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-4, 7-8, 12-13, 15-17 and 31 are amended. Claim 30 is cancelled.
Claims 32-33 are new. Claims 1-29 and 31-33 remain in the case.

The Abstract of the disclosure was objected to because of the use of the term “means.” The Abstract has now been corrected to replace the term “means” with the term “device.”

Claim 31 was objected to because the phrase “the suspension disconnect apparatus” has no clear antecedent. Claim 31 and claim 1 have been amended to provide proper antecedent basis.

Claims 1-4, 17, 18, 29 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S. C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Renfro et al. Claims 1-3 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S. C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ow. Claims 1-3 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S. C. §102(b) as being anticipated by WO93/15923. Claims 1-3 and 23-26 were rejected under 35 U.S. C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Dunagan.

Claim 1 has now been amended to distinguish from the cited prior art and to overcome the aforementioned rejections. Claim 1 has been amended to now require that a suspension disconnect apparatus is provided for allowing the suspension means to be operatively disconnected from the wheel when the wheel is to be retracted, wherein the wheel is mounted to the body of the vehicle by means of one or more suspension linkages in a suspension disconnect apparatus comprises an actuator for operatively connecting a suspension means to or operatively disconnecting a suspension means from one of the suspension linkages. The provision of the actuator indicates that the suspension disconnect according to the present invention is driven, which contrasts with the manual operations which would be required by the cited prior art. Therefore, claim 1 and the associated dependent claims are believed to be allowable over the cited prior art.

A new independent claim 32 is provided. Claim 32 distinguishes from the prior art by virtue of a retraction disconnect means. As with claim 1, claim 32 recites an actuation

means to clarify that this disconnect means is also driven. Basis for the features in claim 32 can be found in original claims 2 and 17-22 and on pages 5, 10, 17, and 18 of the specification. The retraction disconnect means carries the advantage that the suspension system can be isolated from the actuator when the vehicle is used on land such that the characteristics of the suspension can be optimized for road use.

The Applicant notes that the Examiner has found allowable subject matter in claims 5-16 and 19-22 but were objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. The Applicant at this time does not want to rewrite these allowable claims in independent form since the Applicant believes that amended claim 1 and new claim 32 are now allowable themselves.

This Amendment should place this case in condition for passing to issue. Such action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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